goes in for material recycling, a ban may be imposed on dirty coloured carry bags; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The task Force has recommended the ban on the manufacture of dirty coloured carry bags with visible contamination. However, the Task Force has also observed that over 60% of the plastics waste generated in the country goes in for material recycling. The Ministry of Environment and Forests has constituted an Implementation and Monitoring Committee to overview the progress and follow-up of the recommendations of the Task Force.

Ecological Imbalances in Areas under Control of Defence Authorities

1071. SHRI JOYANTA ROY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ecological imbalances are being created daily due to large scale felling of trees and haphazard growth of M.S. Buildings by civilians within areas of control of the Defence Authorities;

(b) if so, whether Government have issued any directives to the Directorate General of Defence Estates in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof and how far these directives have been effective to control the situation; and

(d) what further steps are being contemplated for controlling the damaged evironment of the affected areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Large Scale Deforestation at Tilpat Firing Range

1072. SHRI DEBABRATA BISWAS: SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-items appearing in the 'Pioneer' dated 5th May, 1998 wherein it has been stated that IAF authorities have given a go-ahead for clearing 1480 acres of the range covering 14,06,000 trees at Tilpat firing range near the Hindon Air Force Station, Ghaziabad.

(b) whether such large scale deforestation drive was carried out without mandatory sanction of his Ministry or that of the Ministry of Defence;

(c) if so, the steps propose to protect the environment from such large scale disaster; and

(d) the punitive steps being contemplated against the personnel responsible for such environmental vandalism?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) Yes, Sir, the Government's attention has been drawn to the news item appearing in the 'Pioneer' dated 5th May 1998.

(b) As intimated by the Air Force authorities it is incorrect that the Indian Air Force had bulldozed 520 acres area at Tilpat firing range and destroyed 14 lakh trees. Tilpat firing range encompasses an area of appoximately 4000 acres. Tilpat range is Air Force land and was cleared of bushes and other vegetation in view of flight safetey. Generally no bush or tree is allowed to grow in a firing range area as the vegetation attracts birds of all kinds. When aircrafts are involved in firing of weapons on a firing range such as Tilpat, they have to fly down to low heights at a high speed upto 1000 km per

hour and any birds in the area can be extremely hazardous to aircraft. This firing range was being sparingly used since 1989 and due to this lot of wild bushes have grown in the area. In 1997, it was decided to reactivate it for practising weapon firing by both helicopters and fighter aircraft. Since the range was not in use for last many years, a large number of wild growth of kikker bushes and small trees had grown over this area and there were a number of unauthorised encroachments. With the help of civil courts and district authorities the area was cleared of encroachments in 1997. To make it fit for practising weapon firing it was cleared of wild vegetation.

Since land in question belong to the Ministry of Defence no permision of Ministry of Environment & Forests is necessary for clearing the wild growth of bushes and trees on such lands. The matter regarding use of Tilpat firing range falls within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Defence.

(c) and (d) Question does not arise in view of (b) above.

Central Schemes for Conservation of Forests in the North-Eastern States

1073. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the schemes taken up by the Union Government for the conservation of forests, wildlife and environment in North-Eastern States during 1996-97 and 1997-98;

(b) the amount provided by Government for this during the said period project-wise;

(c) the achievements made under each project during the said period; and

(d) the budgetary allocation made for these projects during the Interim Budget for 1998-99?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) to (d) The Ministry of Environment and Forests implements a number of Centrally Sponsored Schemes for conservation of forests, wildlife and environment in the North-Eastern States. The details of such schemes State-wise alongwith financial assistance provided and achievement made during 1996-97 and 1997-98 and outlays for 1998-99 are given at Annesure. [*See Appeendix 184, Annexure No.* 37].

Tiger Population in the Country

1074. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Silver Jubilee year celebration of the Project Tiger witnessed a steady decline in the tiger population in the country;

(b) how the population graph of Indian tiger moved over the period of operation of the project;

(c) the major steps taken to preserve and promote tiger population during the period and the success achieved thereby; and

(d) what further steps are contemplated to promote and preserve the
Indian Tiger?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) No, Sir. on the contrary there was a steady increase in tiger population of the country till 1989 from 1973 when Project Tiger was launched. However, there was a decline in tiger population during 1989—93. The details of tiger population in the country